# MARYLAND GENERAL BAR EXAMINATION
# <u>ONLINE ELECTRONIC BAR APPLICATION AND PETITION ("eBar")</u>

## <u>OVERVIEW</u>

These instructions will assist you in completing the State Board of Law Examiners' ("SBLE") online electronic Bar Application and/or Petition ("eBar") process for the Maryland General Bar Examination. **SBLE STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT APPLICANTS PRINT THIS DOCUMENT FOR EASY REFERENCE DURING THE ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS.**

- Please take note that applicants must not only create and submit their Applications and/or Petitions electronically, but also **mail or deliver hard copies of their Applications and/or Petitions to SBLE with original signatures, notarization, and supplemental documentation, as necessary, along with the appropriate fees.**

- Completed hard-copy Applications and/or Petitions must be **RECEIVED** in SLBE's Office by 4:30 pm on the filing deadline.

- Any hard-copy Application and/or Petition submitted to SBLE's office after the deadline or submitted by the deadline but incomplete (and where adequate remediation occurs after the deadline) will not be considered "filed" until accompanied by a request for good cause to file late. Applicants must meet the requirements of Board Rule 2 ("Filing Late for Good Cause") in order for a good cause request to be considered by SBLE. Non-conforming good cause requests will be denied.

## <u>General Bar Exam</u>

Recent law school graduates and attorneys who do not meet the eligibility requirements of Rule 13 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Maryland ("RGAB") to sit for the Attorney exam must apply to take the Maryland General Bar Examination. Applicants taking the Maryland General Bar Exam for the first time must complete and submit an Application (consisting of Parts I and II) and an Original Petition to Take a Scheduled Examination. These three (3) documents are all generated within eBar.

Applicants who have previously taken the Maryland General Bar exam one (1) or two (2) times need only submit a Retake Petition (but not an application, unless an update is required). Applicants who have previously taken the Maryland General Bar exam on three (3) or more occasions must submit a Retake Order (but not an application, unless an update is required). Retake applicants will follow the same process for filling out an online Petition as those taking the exam for the first time. eBar will produce the appropriate Petition for each applicant.

Applicants whose applications are stale (i.e., the application remains pending more than three (3) years before the applicant passes the Bar exam) will be required to submit an Updated Application and pay a $70.00 update fee. The Updated Application is discussed further on page 20 of this document.

To access eBar, click on the link for the General Bar Exam Electronic Application from SBLE's website – www.mdcourts.gov/ble. You may also access the site directly from this document at https://jportal.mdcourts.gov/ebarapp/login.do?tmpl=g

## <u>Out-of-State Attorney (Rule 13) Exam</u>

Applicants meeting the requirements of Rule 13 and wishing to sit for the Maryland Out-of-State Attorney exam must file a Petition (RGAB 13(f)). To access eBar for the Out-of-State Attorney's exam, click on the link for the Out-of-State Attorney Bar Exam Electronic Application from SBLE's website – www.mdcourts.gov/ble. You may also access the site directly from this document at: https://jportal.mdcourts.gov/ebarapp/login.do?tmpl=o. A separate instructional document exists for use in completing the online Petition for the Maryland Out-of-State Attorney's Bar Examination.

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## <u>INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING A BAR APPLICATION</u>

### <u>Creating an Account</u>

Completing the Bar Application begins with creating an eBar account. On the Welcome screen, click on the "Create Account" link found near the login boxes.



Fig. 1 – Welcome Screen for the eBar system (General Bar Exam)

*NOTE: Check carefully to ensure you are creating an account for the exam you intend to take – General Bar (GB) Examination or Out of State Attorney's (OSA) Examination.*

You will be taken to the account creation form:



Fig 2 – Account creation form

Complete all required information (marked with a red asterisk "*"). In eBar, your e-mail address becomes your User Name. It is critical that the e-mail address you provide not change during the course of the examination process- from the time you create your account through the swearing-in ceremony. Your password must contain a minimum of eight characters and must contain at least one (1) letter, one (1) number, and one (1) special character (! @ # $ % & or *). Please write down your password. Passwords are case sensitive.

*NOTE: In order to apply for an eBar account, you **must** disclose your U.S. Social Security number, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Family Law, §10-119.3(b). If you do not have a valid Social Security number, you must contact SBLE's office by telephone (410-260-3640) for instructions on how to proceed.*

As you fill out the required fields to create your user account, review your entries carefully before you save your data. Often, applicants will make errors in entering data for their Social Security numbers, date of birth, place of birth,

suffix, prefix, etc. After submission, mistakes may only be corrected by sending a signed letter to the Board noting the error and correction to be made.

When all fields have been completed and double-checked, click "Create Account."

After you submit the required information to create an eBar account, you will receive a confirmation e-mail that you will use to activate your account. Please be aware of the privacy and spam settings on your e-mail account, and ensure that "ebar@mdcourts.gov" is whitelisted in your spam settings.  The email text is as follows:

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*Dear [APPLICANT NAME],*

*Welcome to Maryland e-bar application process. You have successfully registered to our website. However, to access your account and continue with the application submission process you will have to activate your account.*

*To activate your account, click on the link "Activate your account" below.*
*Activate your account*

*If you cannot click on the link above, please copy and paste the link below to your browser.*
*https://jportal.mdcourts.gov/ebarapp/account.activate?q=48561&u=c800f932a9044149edc36af64dc986 4f&d=c28765dbec337b186ca583e07292b3b*

*Sincerely,*

*Jeffrey C. Shipley*
*Secretary, State Board of Law Examiners*
*2011-F Commerce Park Drive*
*Annapolis, MD 21401*
*jeffrey.shipley@mdcourts.gov*

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You **MUST** click on the "Activate your account" link before you can log in to eBar to create your application.  If you do not receive an activation e-mail within a few hours of creating your user account, contact the SBLE Office at (410) 260-3640 during normal business hours (M–F 8:30am to 4:30pm) to manually activate your account.

*CAUTION: E-mail account providers hosted with ".net" domains (e.g., comcast.net, verizon.net, att.net, etc) and AOL **DO NOT** interface with eBar. SBLE strongly recommends that applicants with ".net" and AOL email addresses create a ".com" email address for use with eBar.  SBLE does not endorse any particular ".com" but has noted that Gmail, Yahoo, and Hotmail function properly with eBar.*

*CAUTION:  Applicants using ".edu" email addresses issued by their law schools and/or colleges must ensure that their institution does not "turn off" access to that email address after graduation.  If unsure, another email address should be utilized.*

*CAUTION: Passwords and Security Question Answers are case-sensitive. The system will lock the account after five (5) failed login attempts. Please utilize eBar's "Forgot Password" system to recover your forgotten password prior to locking yourself out.  Applicants who become locked out must contact the Board's Office by telephone (410-260-3640) during normal business hours (8:30a to 4:30p M-F) to unlock their account. Email requests to unlock eBar user accounts cannot be honored due to RGAB 19 confidentiality safeguards.*

**Filling Out the Application and/or Petition Online**

After activating your account, you will be able to log in to eBar and begin your General Bar Application and/or Petition.

Upon logging into eBar, the first screen you will see is the "My Status" screen.
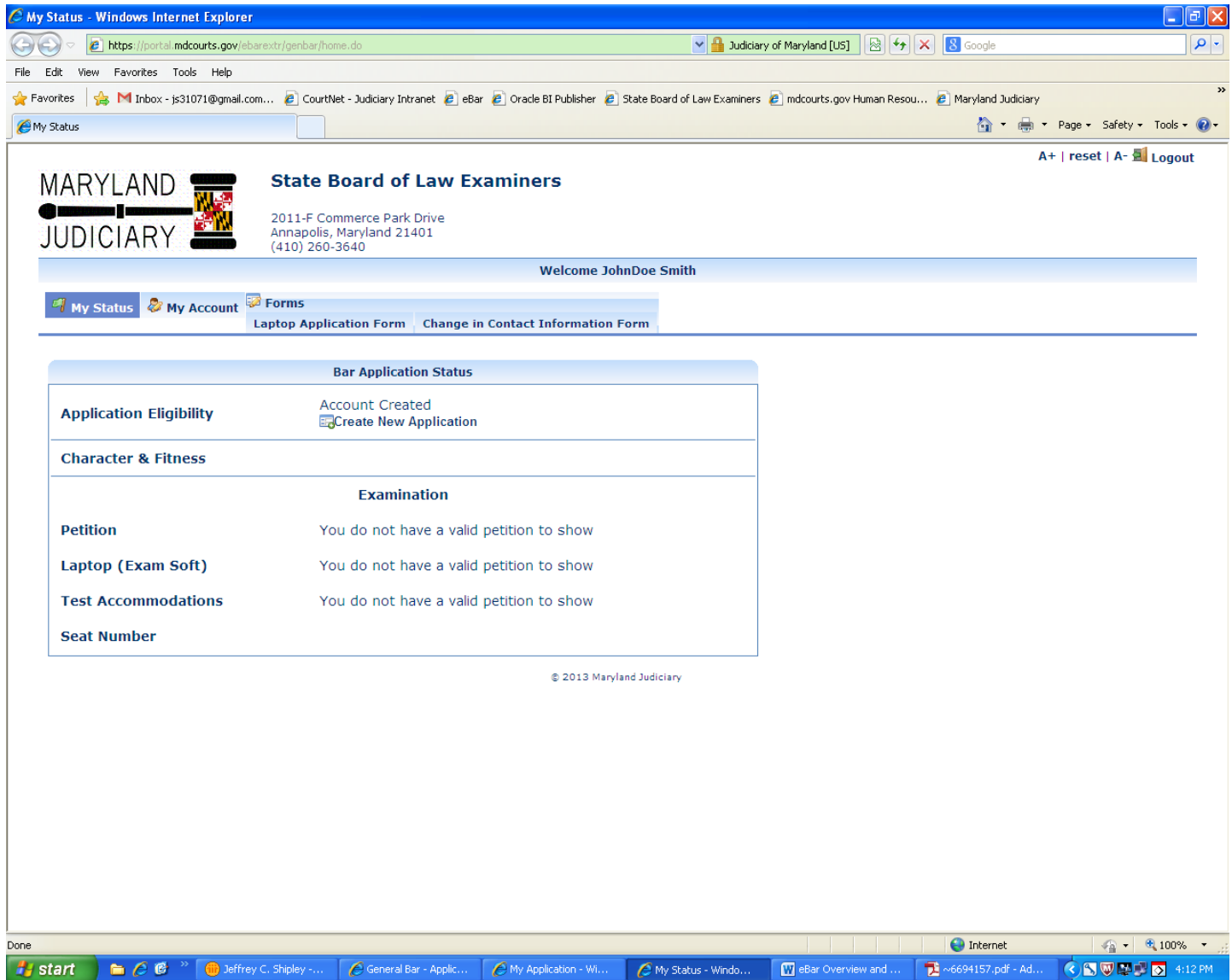


Figure 3 – "My Status" screen (General Bar application shown)

Click on the "Create New Application" button to begin the online application process.

*Note - On the top right of your screen you will see A+, reset, and A-. These are screen viewer adjustments. If you want to increase the size of the screen fonts, click on the A+ symbol. If you want to decrease the size of the screen fonts, click on the A- symbol. If you want the screen fonts back to their original size, click "reset." The screen viewer adjustments appear on each page of the Application.*

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Clicking "New Application" automatically moves you into the first page of the Application – "College Education."



Figure 4 – "My Application" Page 1

The majority of fields on this page are pre-filled with information from the account creation screen. Complete each item marked by a <span style="color:red">red asterisk</span> "*." Then, click "Save Application" at the bottom of the screen, which will take you to the next page of the Application.

**Adding/Editing Details**

Some items on the application require the applicant to "Add Details" (such as to enter information for aliases, residences, employment, marriage details, etc.).

For example, in Figure 5, below, Applicant JohnDoe Smith indicates that he was previously known by another name. Applicant Smith must now "Add Details" regarding his former name.



Figure 5 – "My Application" Page 2 (partial)

Click on the "Add Details" button.

Clicking the "Add Details" button will open a dialogue box, where you will enter your detail information. Then, click "Save Details." You can also edit previously added details by highlighting the details you wish to edit, and clicking on the "Edit Details" button. Revise the detail information, then click "Save Details." JohnDoe Smith has clicked on "Add Detail" and entered his former name, John WilkesBooth Doe, and other information about use of a former name. (See Figure 6, below)



Figure 6 – "My Application" Page 6 (showing open "Add Details" field)

After entering the required information, click "Save Details." This will return you the current page of the Application. On any give page, if you have additional details to add (e.g., multiple employers, multiple residences), click "Add Details," enter the information, click "Save Details," and repeat as many time as needed.

*CAUTION: Do not click on "Save Application" when you are in the "Add Details" box. Your details information will not be saved. You must first save the information within the "Add Details" box by clicking on the "Save Details" button.*

Figure 7, below, shows that JohnDoe Smith's Application now lists his former name. "John WilkesBooth Doe."



Figure 7 – "My Application" page 2 (showing former name)

*TIP:     When you are adding your residence details, you must enter an "end date" even if you still reside at that address. This field is solely used to validate where you have lived for the last ten years, so you may enter the current date as your "end" date for your current address. If you change your address subsequent to submitting your Application and/or Petition you must report that change in writing to the SBLE's office.*

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## Moving from page to page in the Application

You must click on "Save Application" (at the bottom center of each page) when you are ready to move on to the next page. (See Figure 8, below.) If you do not click "Save Application" at the bottom of each page, you will lose the data you entered for that page. However, first review the data you entered to ensure it is completely filled in and correct before you save it.  You must complete an entire page of the application to "Save Application."



Figure 8 – "Save Application" Button

## Viewing the "My Application" Checklist

As you complete the Application, eBar creates a checklist of the Application sections you have completed. Clicking the "My Application" link on the top menu displays this checklist.



*Figure 9 – My Application checklist*

*TIPS: If you exit eBar before submitting your electronic application, you may resume entering data by logging back in and accessing your Application and/or Petition in the "My Application" page. The pages you have completed will be marked with a green "✓". (See Figure 9, above.) Each time you log out of your eBar account without submitting your Petition, you will be required to verify your response to the Petition, laptop request, and special accommodations request. Click "Save & Next" to go to the next page.*

## Submitting the Electronic Application

A green "✓" next to each item in Application Part I and Application Part II in the "My Application" Checklist indicates that you are ready to submit your General Bar application.



Figure 10 – My Application Checklist – Ready to Submit

When you are certain that you have entered and double-checked all required information, click on the "Submit Application" link at the bottom of the Checklist. (See Figure 10, above.)

If your submission is successful, you will receive a message toward the top of your screen (see Figure 11, below). Also, the "Submit Application" link will display a green "✓"



Figure 11 – My Application checklist showing successful submission message and "✓."

You should then go to your "My Status" page.

The "My Status" page will indicate that your General Bar application has been submitted online and display printer icons. (See Figure 12, below). Your application is ready to be printed, signed and filed with SBLE.
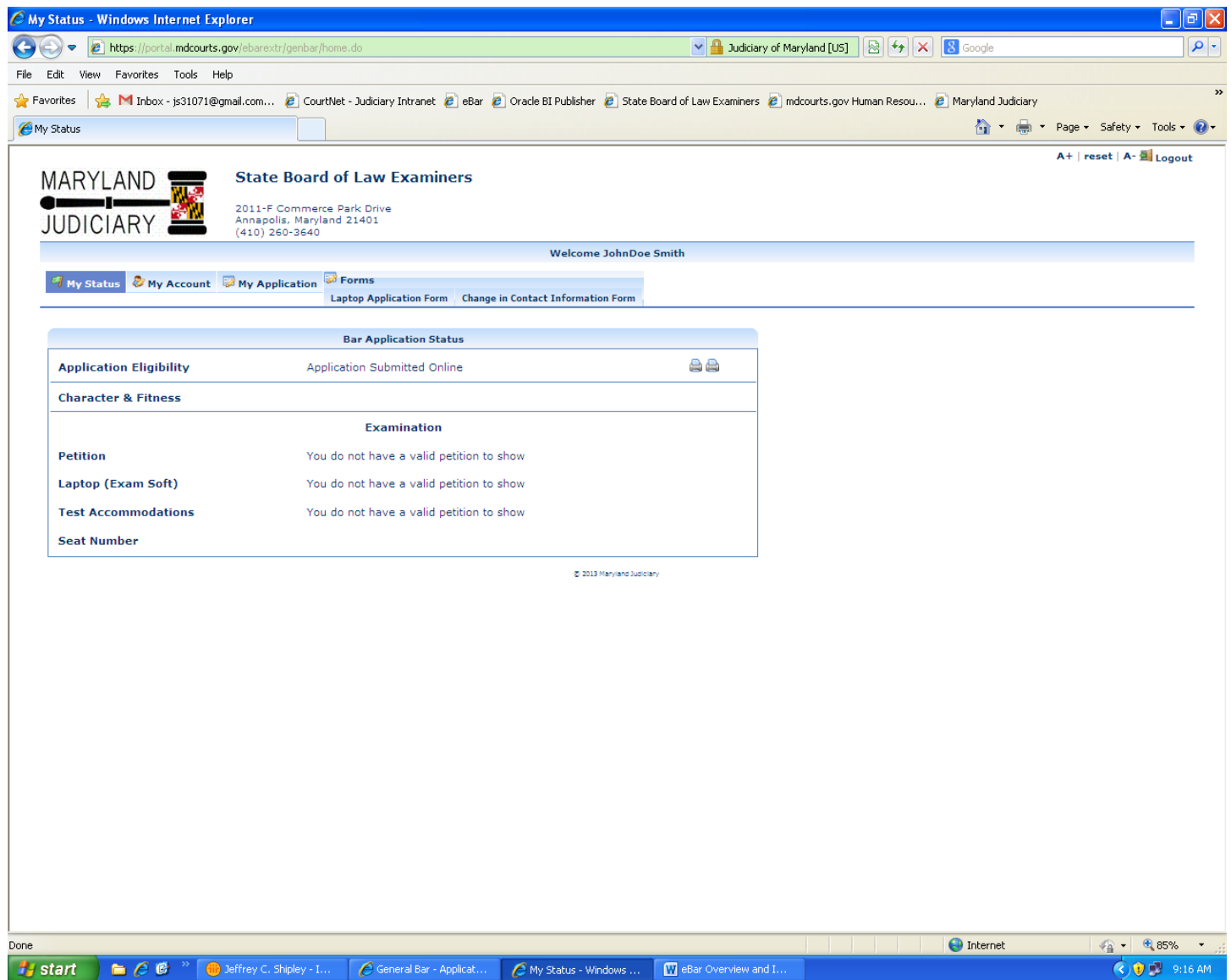


Figure 12 – My Status page showing "Application Submitted Online" and printer icons

If you intend to sit for a scheduled General Bar Examination, you should move on to completing the Petition, and, if appropriate, the Laptop Use and Accommodations Requests.

**COMPLETING THE PETITION TO SIT FOR A SCHEDULED BAR EXAM (GENERAL BAR ONLY)**

Once General Bar applicants have completed and submitted the Application (Parts I and II), a red "x" will remain by the "Petition," "Laptop Request," and "Accommodations Request" links. (Figure 11, above.) Applicants who intend to sit for a scheduled Bar Exam must click on "Petition to Sit for the Maryland Bar Exam" and then fill out the fields for the Petition. The process is the same as for filling out the Application (Part I and Part II), however, **you must complete the Petition, Laptop Request and Accommodations Request screens in one session**. Otherwise, your Petition will not be saved.



Figure 13 – Original Petition to Take Maryland Bar Examination

Select the exam session you plan to take from the dropdown box. eBar will pre-fill most of the fields with information from your application. Complete the required fields "*" and click "Save Application." (Figure 13, above.) Then click, "Next Page" (to the right of "Save Application.) You will be taken to the Laptop Request screen.

*NOTE: When you click on the link in the "My Application" checklist to create your Petition, eBar will bring up the correct type of petition (original, retake, retake order) automatically.*

**Laptop Requests**

If you wish to use a laptop on the General Bar Exam, click the radio button for "Use a Laptop computer for the written test." (Figure 14, below.) You must also check the box on the lower left hand side of the screen that you have read, understand and agree to the terms relative to your request. Then, click "Save Application," and "Next Page" to be taken to the "Accommodations Request" page.



Figure 14 – Laptop Request page

*CAUTION: The Laptop Request in eBar is only the first step in the laptop application process. Applicants who wish to use laptop computers for the Day 1 (Essay Day) portion of the Maryland bar exam must (1) check the laptop designation in eBar first **AND** (2) print off and mail/deliver a signed, hard copy Laptop Application Form to the Board's Office by the filing deadline. The Laptop Application may be found at: http://www.courts.state.md.us/ble/pdfs/laptopapplicationform.pdf. This link may be accessed from your "My Status" page, or SBLE's website.*

## Accommodations Requests

Applicants planning to request an ADA testing accommodation must click the radio button for "Yes" in response to the question, "Are you applying for test accommodations for the Bar Exam. (Figure 14, below.) You must also check the box indicating review of the terms and conditions. Then, click "Save Application, which will return you to the "My Application Checklist."



Figure 14 – Request Test Accommodations screen

*CAUTION: Applicants who plan to request ADA testing accommodations for the Maryland Bar exam must (1) complete the "Request for Special Accommodations" in eBar first **AND** (2) print the Instructions and Applicant's Accommodations Request Form, fulfill all the requirements therein, and mail/hand-deliver a complete and fully documented Request Form to the Board's Office by the filing deadline. The Applicant's Accommodations Request Form may be found at:*

*http://www.courts.state.md.us/ble/pdfs/testaccommodations.pdf.*

On the "My Application" screen, click "Submit Petition." Each line of the Petition section will show a green "✓." (See Figure 15, below.)



*Figure 15 – My Application page after submission of Petition*

You have now completed the process of creating and submitting your Applications and Petitions online, **BUT YOU ARE NOT FINISHED**. You must still print and submit hard copies of your Application and Petition, with all required signatures and supporting documentation.

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## PRINTING and FILING YOUR HARD COPY APPLICATION AND/OR PETITION

Once you have submitted your Application and Petition electronically, go to your "My Status" page. You should see two (2) printer icons for the Application (one for Part I and one for Part II of the General Bar application) and (1) printer icon for the Petition.  (See Figure 16, below.)
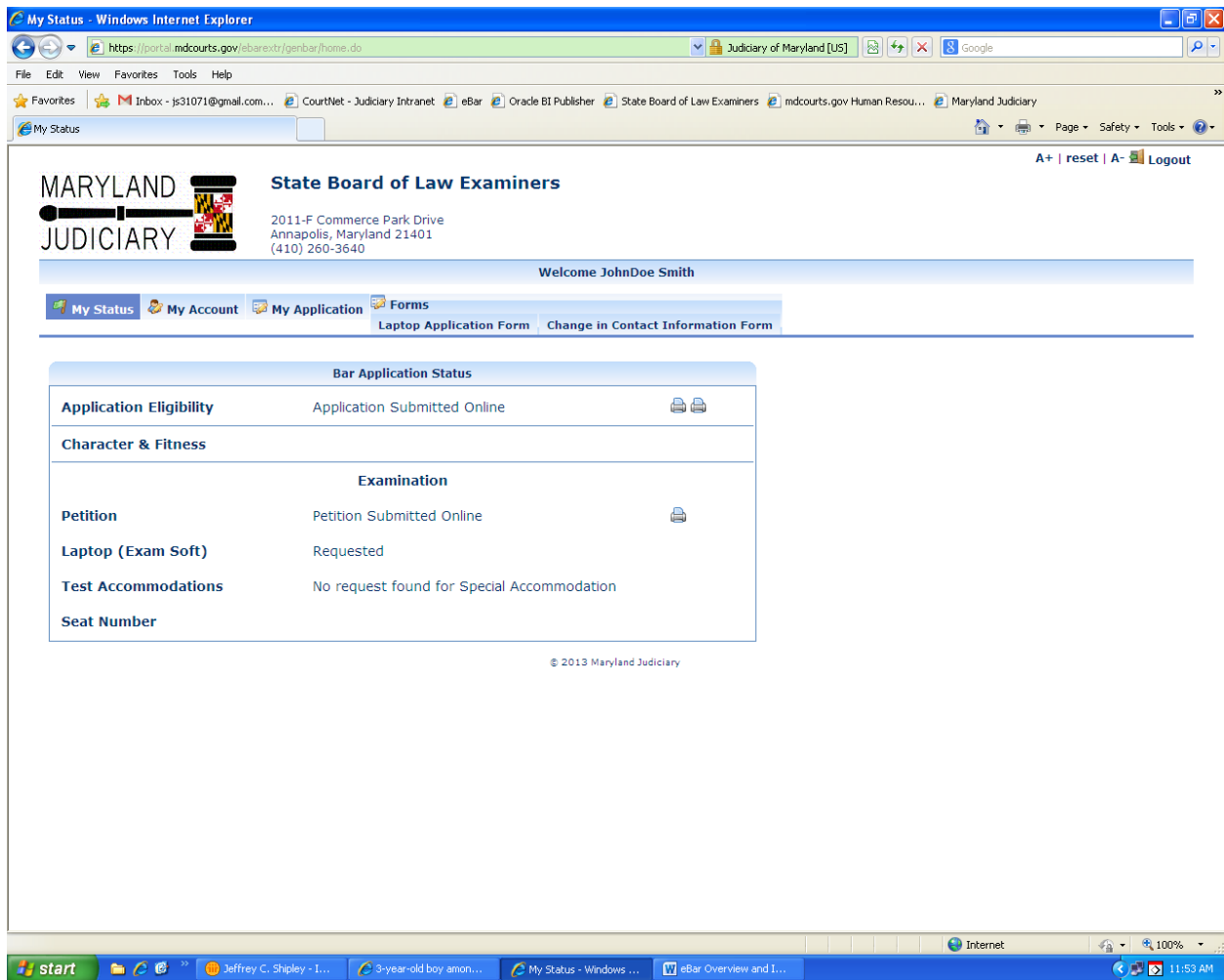


Figure 16 – "My Status" showing printer icons.

Click on the icon(s) to print a copies of your Application and Petition.

*CAUTION: If your printed document(s) contain(s) a "VOID" watermark, you did not electronically submit the documents. Go back to "My Application" and scroll down to the bottom of the page until you see "Submit Application" and/or "Submit Petition". Click on Submit and look for your confirmation message. Then return to My Status and re-print the document(s). You should now have no "Void" watermarks.*

You must sign each document where indicated and have the forms notarized as required. You must also provide supplemental documentation as necessary in order for your Application to be complete. Part II of the General Bar Application includes a Checklist (1st page) to ensure you include all the required documents. Please review the checklist carefully.

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**Only complete Applications submitted online and in hard-copy with the required signatures, notary stamps and filing fee(s) will be treated as "filed" by SBLE.** When SBLE processes your hard copy Application (GB) along with original signatures, notarization and supplemental documents, your "My Status" page will display changes to your status. You may also receive e-mails from the eBar system when your status changes.

### APPLICATIONS PENDING MORE THAN THREE YEARS

Applicants whose applications have been pending more than three (3) years before passing the Maryland Bar Exam must complete and electronically submit an Updated Application before eBar will permit the creation and submission of a Petition (original, Retake, or Retake Order) to take a scheduled examination. eBar will permit you to copy the information from your prior electronic Application in order to assist you in completing your new Updated Application. Except as noted below, the Updated Application must be printed, signed and filed in the same manner as the original Application, along with the prescribed fees and attachments.

NOTE: General Bar Applicants submitting Updated Applications pursuant to this requirement must complete and electronically submit Part I and Part II of the Application. Those Applicants must also sign and file hard copies of Part II (Character & Fitness) with the prescribed fee, but are NOT REQUIRED to file a completed hard-copy Part I (College Education).

CAUTION: The "copy" function is only available if you electronically submitted an original application or updated application after October 4, 2010 in the eBar system.

CAUTION: If an update is required, you may not file a new Petition in our office to take a scheduled bar examination until the completed new updated Application is filed in our office along with the prescribed update fee.